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## NOTES ON MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT.

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### AMERICAN CITIES.

**Pennsylvania.**—*Cities of the Third Class.* In the May (1896) number of the ANNALS\* an account was given of the convention of delegates from cities of the third class, which had been called for the purpose of considering changes in the legislation affecting such cities. At this convention, a committee of the city solicitors was appointed to examine into the legislation and propose amendments. In its report this committee, has proposed three amendments, embodied in three bills. The first provides for the election of a receiver of taxes, to hold office for a period of three years. The act retains the old provision of payment by commissions; section 8 providing that the receiver of taxes is to be entitled to one per centum on all taxes paid to him before any penalty has been incurred, and five per centum on all taxes after such penalty. In other respects the position of this official is to be much the same as in cities of the second class. It is rather to be regretted that the committee did not feel inclined to profit by the experience of the larger cities in abolishing the commission system. It is true that the reasons in support of this system are stronger in the smaller towns, but the fact that it introduces an element of uncertainty into the office ought to outweigh any consideration of immediate economy.

The second proposed amendment is contained in a bill to regulate the civil service in cities of the third class. Section 1 provides that the mayor of each city of the third class shall appoint three persons for a period of three years, who shall constitute a civil service commission. No two members are to be of the same political party, and all commissioners to be removable at the discretion of the mayor. Rules for admission to the municipal civil service are to be prepared by the commission, subject to the approval of councils. The rules thus formulated shall apply to the police and fire departments, other than the police and fire commissioners and chief marshals, or chiefs of police in fire departments, and to all employes in any of the other departments or the city government, except ordinary day laborers. The act provides, however, that the civil service rules are not to be applicable to "officers who are elected by the people, or by city councils, under existing laws," nor to the treasurer, comptroller or city solicitor or their

\* Vol. vii., p. 506.

subordinates. This, of course, means that quite a large body of the most important officials who would naturally be subject to civil service requirements, are to be excluded. The act endeavors to prevent the use of political influence by members of the national congress, the state legislature, or of city councils; and to prohibit the levying of contributions from city officials for political purposes. It is furthermore provided that the rules to be framed by the commission must include: first, the classification of employments and offices to be filled; second, the conditions for each employment; and, third, the conditions of promotion to be based on merit, seniority in service, or examination. Taking the act as a whole, it furnishes the basis for a well-developed municipal civil service. As in all such measures, however, the efficiency of the provisions will depend entirely upon the character of the commissions. In such cases it is almost impossible to lay down rules sufficiently rigid to bind a commission unfavorable to civil service reform.

The third bill embodies a series of amendments to the general law relating to cities of the third class. As this bill contains a number of important changes, we shall reserve its discussion for the January number.

**New York.**—*Improvement of Slum Districts.*—The necessity of adopting more radical measures for the improvement of the worst slum areas is gradually forcing itself upon the community. The work of philanthropic companies and individuals, while productive of a great amount of good during the past ten years, has been wholly inadequate to reach the root of the evil. That the organized action of the community in some form would ultimately be necessary has been apparent to all who have been following the movement for sanitary dwellings for the poor. Several acts have been passed by the state legislature looking to this end, but the more important have been held to be unconstitutional, owing to the many restrictions and safeguards placed about the exercise of the right of eminent domain.

As a result of the recent report of the Tenement House Commission,\* an act was passed authorizing the board of health to condemn and order the tearing down of any building, if, in the opinion of the board, it is in a condition detrimental to the health of the occupants or others in the vicinity. The same power was given in cases where a building is so placed as to obstruct ventilation in an adjoining building, and where repairs will not place the structure in habitable condition.

\* See ANNALS, September, 1896, Vol. viii., p. 409.

Acting under the powers conferred by this law the board of health has recently condemned fifteen tenements as unfit for human habitation. As to some of these the objection rested upon the lack of possibility of ventilation as well as the general unsanitary conditions. The owners of the property will probably bring the question before the courts to test the constitutionality of the measure. However, the increasing density of population in these districts and the awakening sense of the community to the dangers involved to the general health and social welfare of the city must necessarily result in the recognition of the right of the public authorities to step in either under the power of eminent domain or what is more probable—under the general police power.

*Political Situation.\**—The absence of local political excitement has given to the city administration an opportunity to establish itself more firmly than hitherto as a reform administration. The departments have settled down to work in a manner which must give satisfaction to the friends of good government. Recent appointments made by Mayor Strong, to fill vacancies in important commissions, have been made without reference to the political considerations which avowedly influenced his earlier appointments. The appointees are men of ability and integrity, and may be trusted to do their duty fearlessly and honestly. The general effect has been to elevate the standard of the administration. It is reasonable to believe that the effect will be to dispel the distrust of reform which had begun to take hold of the public mind. If the standard thus set up is maintained until the end of the present administration the task of establishing permanent good government for the city will be vastly simplified.

Those who were instrumental in effecting the defeat of Tammany Hall in 1894 are already looking forward to the great municipal election in November, 1897. At that time the constitutional amendments separating local from other elections will be fully operative, and the citizens will be called upon to act at the polls solely with reference to the interests of the city. The necessity for early preparation for that election is fully appreciated, and in all probability the first steps of a great reform municipal campaign will be taken soon after the national election in November. These steps can be taken without definite knowledge as to the results of the labors of the commission now engaged in preparing a charter for the Greater New York. The subcommittee of that commission, appointed to make a preliminary draft of a charter, has nearly completed its work, and the draft will be presented to the full commission within a few weeks. After the final draft has been adopted by the commission it will be presented to the

\*Communication of James W. Pryor, Esq., Secretary of City Reform Club.

legislature, which will have power to enact it into law with such changes as the legislature may see fit to make. A brief discussion of the chief points of the proposed charter may be deferred until the commission has received the report of its committee.

During the summer the Good Government Clubs have been engaged in effective work of a non-political character. In the early spring the Council of Good Government Clubs secured as general agent Mr. Jacob A. Riis, well known for his strenuous efforts to improve the condition under which the great body of New York's citizens live. By persistent effort, and with the aid of the political force represented by the clubs, he has secured the attention, and in many cases the co-operation, of the authorities. The result has been to secure a number of minor reforms. Larger matters have been undertaken, as well, with gratifying success. The work of condemning rear tenement houses, spoken of in the last number of the ANNALS,\* was begun only after the clubs had brought persistent pressure to bear upon the authorities. Mr. Riis made a special investigation, and produced facts as to the condition of many of these houses which could not be ignored. Nearly a hundred rear tenements have now been condemned.

During six or seven weeks of the summer, counsel representing the clubs was in daily attendance at the district courts. These courts, scattered throughout the city, have jurisdiction of landlord and tenant cases and of most of the petty litigations in which the poor and more defenceless members of the community are interested. The results of this investigation have been embodied in a report, which has been placed in the hands of the Greater New York charter commission.

*Public Education.*—One of the grave abuses of the educational system of the city has been the commitment of truant children to institutions designed primarily for the confinement of criminals. The board of education has been reluctant to proceed under a new law giving it the power to establish special truant schools. To the pressure brought to bear by the Good Government Clubs, the board refused to yield. At length, however, the clubs enlisted the state superintendent of instruction, and under the threat from him that the appropriation of state money for the board of education of the city would be withheld unless the truant schools provided for by law were established, the board at length decided to take steps to open such schools.

**Providence.**—In June of the present year a municipal league was formed in Providence upon the same basis as the other associations of that character throughout the country. The main objects, as embodied

\* Vol. viii., p. 409.

in the declaration of principles, are to secure the separation of municipal affairs from state and national politics; the conduct of the business of the city on business principles, and to keep before the citizens the necessity of continuous interest in municipal topics.

**Omaha.\***—After repeated investigations and protracted checking of books by experts, it has been definitely determined that the shortage in the city treasury will amount to something over \$115,000. Ex-Treasurer Bolln himself was brought to trial last spring on the charge of embezzlement. The first trial resulted in a disagreement. The second trial resulted promptly in conviction, but the sentence was suspended pending an appeal to the supreme court.

The treasurer's bondsmen, after dilatory proceedings lasting fifteen months, presented to the council in September a compromise proposition inviting settlement of the city's claim of over \$100,000 for \$18,000. The proposition was naturally rejected, and it is expected that suit will soon be pressed against the sureties for recovery of the misappropriated money on the bond.

The election this fall affects the city only in the matter of the choice of councilmen. Here, however, a peculiar complication has arisen. Under an ordinance passed by the council, one of the councilmen who was appointed to fill a vacancy created by the death of a councilman-at-large, contends that his term is the same as would have been that of the deceased official instead of extending only to the next general election. There seems to be a conflict on this point between the statute and the ordinance. The mayor says his election proclamation will call for the choice of the nine ward councilmen only. The party conventions, on the other hand, threaten to nominate a tenth man to fill the vacancy. The question will in all probability come before the courts for judicial interpretation.

#### FOREIGN CITIES.

**London.**—The quarterly meeting of the London Municipal Society which was held on the evening of the twenty-seventh of June, may serve as an indication of the growth of civic spirit and of a unified municipal sentiment which promises the most excellent results in the near future. The Municipal Society representing one municipal party and the London Reform Union representing the other, have done much to acquaint the citizens of the metropolis with their own institutions. The work of the former has been of an educational character, the method of work being to distribute pamphlet literature bearing on the various phases of city life. Politically the associations represent the moderate and progressive parties, respectively, but their

\* Communication of Victor Rosewater, Ph.D., Omaha.

educational work has often been of a general rather than of a party character. The Reform Union, which represents much the more advanced Liberal sentiment, has been conducting a series of municipal excursions in which large numbers of citizens have taken part and which have thus acquainted many, who had formerly no knowledge of the condition of city institutions, with the work and aims of the county council. Associations with similar ends in view are rapidly increasing in London and are giving to the metropolis an intensity of civic life which it has not known during the century.

The annual address of the chairman of the London County Council gives a résumé of the work of the council during the year ending June 30, 1896. The subject which has occupied the most important place in the deliberations of the council, has been the water supply and the relation of the council to the various water companies. During the summer the East End districts suffered greatly from a water famine and it was charged that the water company had failed to make adequate provision for the needs of the population. The council took advantage of the public feeling in the matter and advocated the purchase of all water rights by the council. The bill was introduced into Parliament and was vigorously pushed by the council. Naturally, the companies offered violent opposition to their expropriation. Parliament was not prepared, however, to immediately grant the necessary power; though it is probable that during the coming year the council may be more successful in their effort to obtain direct control of the water supply. In his annual address, Sir Arthur Arnold comments upon the advisability of such a step and expresses the belief that through arbitration, terms of purchase, satisfactory to the council as well as to the companies, might be agreed upon.

**Glasgow.**—*Housing of the Working Classes.* On June 11 the city of Glasgow celebrated the thirtieth anniversary of the passage of the Glasgow Improvement Trust Act, which opened a new epoch in the history of the city. The operation of this act and the results obtained have given to the world a striking instance of the possibilities of reconstruction of slum districts, when a bold and enterprising policy is combined with business capacity, far-seeing methods and careful administration. When in 1864 a number of philanthropic citizens formed an association for the purpose of effecting some changes in the unfortunate condition of the slum population, they little knew of the difficulties which their efforts would encounter. The necessity of paying exorbitant prices for such property and the impossibility of buying tracts of land owing to the limited resources, soon convinced them of the utter hopelessness

of permanent improvement through private initiative. In this respect their experience did not stand alone. Almost all of the larger English and many of the American cities have similar failures to record. It was this fact that led Parliament to extend greatly the powers of municipalities in order to meet these needs. It was natural that Glasgow should take the lead as the conditions there were probably worse than in any of the cities of Great Britain. The lack of effective supervision and regulation at a time when the city was growing most rapidly was the main cause of these unfortunate conditions. They cannot be better described than in the words of Sir James Watson, who spoke of the district in the following terms:

"From each side of the Gallowgate, High Street, Saltmarket, Trongate, etc., there are narrow lanes or closes running like so many rents or fissures backward to the extent of two, or sometimes three hundred feet in which tenements of three or four stories stand behind each other, generally built so close on each side that the women can either shake hands or scold each other, as they often do, from the opposite windows. When clothes are put out from such windows to dry, as is usually done by means of sticks, they generally touch each other. The breadth of these lanes is, in most instances, from three to four feet, the expense of the ground having at first induced the proprietor to build upon every available inch of it. Throughout the whole of these districts the population is densely crowded. In many of the lanes and closes there are residing in each not fewer than five, six and even seven hundred souls, and in one close we observed thirty-eight families occupying one common stair. In the Tontine Close there are nearly eight hundred of the most vicious of our population crowded together, forming one immense hot-bed of debauchery and crime."

In order to deal with this problem in the manner required, it was necessary to apply to Parliament for special power to take unsanitary property in large areas by compulsory purchase.\*

The plan at first met with great opposition from the citizens who objected to the heavy tax-rate which it involved. The town council held to its purpose, however, and in 1867 levied a special rate of sixpence on the pound to be applied exclusively to this object. From 1867 until the present time the work of expropriation, demolition and reconstruction has been going on. The tax rate for new purchases and constructions has been steadily diminishing owing to advantageous sales and profit from rentals on city property. During

\*For a full description of the terms of the Act, and the earlier history of the Improvement Trust, see "Municipal Government in Great Britain," by Albert Shaw. New York: Century Co., 1894.



the present year it has been merely nominal—a farthing on the pound, and will entirely disappear in the budget of 1896. At the present time the city owns over 1000 dwellings—each complex of rooms constituting a dwelling—housing over 6000 people. In addition a large number of model lodging houses have been constructed by the municipality and have served to raise greatly the standard of that class of institutions throughout the city.

Owing to the high price of the property expropriated in the centre of the city, it has not been possible to reconstruct the district on a plan to give ample accommodations to the working classes. The rents of the new constructions have been rather higher than this class is willing to pay—at any rate in Scotland.\* Four shillings per week for two rooms does not seem high for American standards, but it must be borne in mind that the wages of the Scotch working-man are lower than those of the American and furthermore that the former is not willing to pay as large a percentage of income in rental as the latter. The Improvement Trust Board has been subjected to much criticism because of its failure to meet the needs of the working classes. It must be said, however, that under the peculiar conditions, the property has been utilized in the best possible way and the worst of the slum districts eradicated.

Now that this work is approaching completion, the city proposes to attack the other problem—to provide suitable and sanitary dwellings for the working classes. At a meeting of the town council on June 18, Bailie Chisholm, the chairman of the Improvement Trust Board, made the formal proposition for power to prepare plans and apply to Parliament for further powers to expropriate property for the express purpose of providing dwellings for the working classes. The motion was carried with but three dissenting voices. In the speech supporting the motion, Mr. Chisholm showed the necessity of such houses, the inability or lack of inclination of private builders to supply them at a suitable price and the advisability of undertaking this work directly by the municipality. This means a very wide extension of municipal powers, but in view of the excellent credit of the city—which is able to borrow at two and one-half per cent—and the successful construction of dwellings under the Act of 1866, there seems to be every

\* The average rental of the municipal tenements is as follows:

	Per Annum.
Single room apartments, . . . . .	\$38 00
One room and kitchen, . . . . .	53 00
Two rooms and kitchen, . . . . .	91 00
Three rooms and kitchen, . . . . .	130 75
Four rooms and kitchen, . . . . .	212 50

probability of financial success, whereas the social results obtainable will not even admit of question.

The most recent work of the board has been the erection of a Family Home, which is already proving itself a great blessing to one of the most deserving elements in the population, viz., widowers or widows who are compelled to go out to daily work, but have no persons with whom to leave their children. The home is intended to meet a very evident need of the working classes, but is in no sense to be regarded as a philanthropic undertaking. While having its many social advantages in view the Improvement Trust has planned to obtain the ordinary commercial return on the investment. The large and commodious building contains 165 bedrooms, a number of general common rooms, nurseries, etc. Bathrooms and lavatories are well distributed throughout the building; also small kitchens to prepare food for infants. The recreation rooms for the children is not an unimportant feature of the establishment. A number of nurses take charge of the children during the entire day, so that many who were formerly compelled to remain locked in one small room, enjoy themselves in the open air throughout the day. With all this the charges are comparatively low. The tariff of rates, which include washing, light, heat and care of children is as follows:\*

For mother, 62½ cents, with 1 child, 16½ cents, or 79 cents per week; with 2 children, 33 cents, or 95½ cents per week; with 3 children, 37½ cents, or \$1.00 per week, and 12½ cents for each additional child.

For father, 87½ cents, with 1 child, 16½ cents, or \$1.04 per week; with 2 children 33½ cents, or \$1.21 per week; with 3 children, 50 cents, or \$1.37½ per week, and 16 cents for each additional child.

Charges for board are: Adults, breakfast, 5 cents, dinner, 8 cents; tea, 6 cents, or 19 cents per day.

It is thus possible for a widow with three children to live very comfortably for \$3.38 per week, and a widower with same number of children for \$3.75 per week.

One of the difficulties with which the management feels that it may have to contend, is the inclination on the part of some of the lower classes to abandon their children. This necessitates the exercise of a certain amount of discrimination in admitting boarders to the institution. As a means of offering healthy surroundings to the children of the poor, especially the class generally most neglected, the family home is doing an incalculable amount of good.

\*Basis of calculation is twenty-five cents to the shilling.

*Municipal Street Railway System.*—The annual report of the street railway department has just been published, and shows a most satisfactory condition of this municipal enterprise. It will be remembered that when, in 1894, the franchise of the street railway company expired, the entire system was taken over by the city. The company had expected the city to purchase the entire rolling stock, which would have been done had the company pledged itself not to enter into competition with the city through the running of omnibuses. As the company refused to do this, the city council determined to reject all offers for the purchase of the cars and horses and to order an entirely new rolling stock. The period ending May 31, 1896, closes the first complete fiscal year of municipal operation of the street railway system. The gross revenue has been about \$1,700,000, the expenditures about \$1,250,000, leaving a net profit of \$45,000. In the expenses of operation are included renewals, alterations, new buildings and the like. The fares have been considerably reduced during the period of municipal operation. In addition to the two-cent fares over all the lines during the hours 6 to 7 a. m. and 5 to 6 p. m., intended for workmen, the regular fares have been graded from one to six cents according to distances. The scale is as follows:

One cent . . . . .	.58 miles.
Two cents . . . . .	1.52 "
Three cents . . . . .	2.25 "
Four cents . . . . .	3.27 "
Five cents . . . . .	4.21 "
Six cents . . . . .	5.37 "

At the present time the city is considering the advisability of adopting electricity as a motive power, but as there is considerable feeling against an overhead trolley system, no definite conclusion has been reached. The department has, furthermore, been very greatly hampered by the fact that, in order to make any extension of lines, application for special powers must be made to Parliament. The effect of this is to greatly retard the development of a rapid transit system. The present lack of such a system has been one of the most fruitful causes of congestion of population in most of the Scotch towns.

*Drainage System.*—The city has been successful in obtaining power from Parliament to greatly extend the system of sewage purification, so successfully applied to one section of the town. It is probable that the city would have had sufficient power to deal with this question under one of the comprehensive public health acts, but having become accustomed to obtaining special acts from Parliament, there seems to be a very general unwillingness, characteristic of most of the

cities of Scotland, to act under these general laws. The feeling seems to be that more comprehensive powers may be obtained by a special act of Parliament. The experience of Glasgow with the sewage purification works, since the beginning of operation in May, 1894, has been of a kind to place beyond doubt the efficacy of this method of dealing with the city's sewage. The precipitation process, with sulphate of alumina and lime as precipitants and sand and charcoal filtration for purification, is employed. The water as discharged into the Clyde after undergoing this process is perfectly clear—free from all odor, and, it is said, palatable as drinking water. The sale of the solid waste will, in time, serve to make the works self-supporting. The gain in health and comfort to the city has been very great. The present works can deal with 10,000,000 gallons of sewage per day, which is less than 20 per cent of that of the entire city. The area at present drained to the purification works covers 3465 acres, with a population of nearly 90,000. The cost of the purification works was about \$525,000. The remaining portions of the city still drain directly into the Clyde, making of it in places an open sewer.

*Gas Report.* The annual report of the municipal gas department shows the eminently satisfactory condition of this branch of the municipal administration. The report covers the period from May 31, 1894, to June 1, 1895. The total income was \$3,150,000; the total expenditure, \$2,400,000. Some \$350,000 was charged to wear and tear, leaving a net profit, after paying all interest charges, of about \$40,000. The fact that the coal used costs about \$2.75 per ton, while the price of gas is but sixty cents per thousand cubic feet, accounts for this comparatively small profit. Glasgow, as most of the other municipalities of Great Britain, is establishing a series of water gas plants. The plan is to mix the water gas with coal gas. The advantage claimed for this system is that a very much inferior quality of coal can be used, and the coal gas product enriched with water gas. Furthermore, the water gas system will permit of a far more rapid increase in product without any considerable addition to the number of retorts. During the period covered by the report, the municipality has rented over 12,000 gas stoves. The low price of gas has induced many families to abandon the coal stove for all ordinary cooking purposes. Gas motors for small workshops are also used to a considerable extent.

*Water Supply.* The new and largest of the system of reservoirs constructed by the municipality was opened in June of the present year. The two great reservoirs now in use contain sufficient water to supply the city for twenty-four days. The new reservoir has a water surface of  $86\frac{1}{4}$  acres, and will hold 700,000,000 gallons of

water. The total cost of the reservoir, including land, has been \$1,500,000.

**Manchester.**—*Municipal Cold-Storage Plant.* The influence of the municipality in developing the commercial resources of the community, and, at the same time, contributing to the cheapening of the food supply, is strikingly illustrated in several of the institutions which have recently been established in Manchester. The completion of the ship canal has made the city a seaport town; the largest freight steamers can now reach the docks of the canal with little difficulty. The great import trade of frozen meats and other perishable goods, which has become so important a factor in the English imports, necessitated the erection of cold-storage plants on a large scale. The municipality decided to undertake this work, and, between June, 1893, and January, 1895, constructed one of the most complete establishments of its kind in the world. The warehouse is within easy access of the canal docks and is directly connected with the municipal slaughter-houses. In various portions of the building the different temperatures, ranging from that required for chilling meats to the lowest temperature necessary to preserve them in frozen condition, are maintained. Everything is so constructed that frozen meats may be transferred from vessels with the least possible delay. The first, second and third floors will each accommodate about 25,000 carcasses of sheep. The facilities for handling goods are such that between five and six thousand sheep can be received or delivered per hour. Another advantage of considerable importance is the facility thus offered to butchers and dealers in domestic meat to keep the same in good condition. It has also greatly facilitated the work of inspection. The great increase in the frozen meat trade which this warehouse has fostered, has considerably reduced the price of meat in the city.

**Sheffield.**—The experience of Huddersfield and Glasgow in the municipalization of the street railway system, has encouraged other cities of Great Britain to adopt the same policy. Inasmuch as the original franchises have all been granted for a limited period, the possibility of municipal operation without the expensive method of expropriation, is greatly increased. In fact, most of the English cities have from the very outset adopted the plan of constructing the street railway lines and leasing them to companies for a period of from fifteen to twenty-one years. In July of the present year the period of lease of the Sheffield street railway company, expired. The development of the service under the management of this private corporation had been extremely unsatisfactory; the rates of fare had remained relatively high; extensions in the service were not made in any direct

proportion to the actual growing needs of the community. The entire city, covering an area of about 19,000 acres, had but nine and one-third miles of track. For some time previous, negotiations, into which the company was anxious to enter for an extension of the franchise, had been definitely broken off by the resolution of the city council to take over this service. Application was made to Parliament for power to operate the street railway system, and in May of the present year this power was obtained. The city bought the rolling-stock of the company, and on the tenth of July municipal management was inaugurated. The authorities decided immediately upon a number of important changes and improvements. In the first place, considerable extension of the lines is to be made which will probably result in relieving the extreme congestion in some of the central districts. The question of the change of motive power from horse to electricity will also be taken into consideration in order to afford a means of more rapid transit.

The most important changes, however, will have reference to the system of fares and the relation of the municipality to the railway employes. As regards the former, it is the intention to so reduce the fares as to offer a ride over a considerable distance for two cents, gradually increasing the amount according to the distance. The hours of labor of both drivers and conductors are to be considerably decreased. Under the management of the company, the men were compelled to work between ninety and one hundred hours per week; a sixteen-hour day being by no means an unusual occurrence. The city proposes to introduce the ten-hour day upon all lines without any considerable reduction of wages. It is true that the daily wage of drivers and conductors in the English cities does not approach the amount paid to American street railway employes; twenty shillings per week is regarded as a very fair average. In any general estimate of the success of municipal management and operation in England, this element of the improvement in labor conditions must occupy an important place. In all the cities where such a change has been made, the position of the employes has been greatly improved.

**Edinburgh.**—*Extension of City Limits.*—Within recent years many of the cities of Great Britain, notably Glasgow and Manchester, have brought surrounding suburban districts within the limits of the city. At the present time Edinburgh contemplates a great extension of its municipal boundaries. In a report presented by the town clerk to the town council, the general outline of the scheme, together with the advantages to be expected therefrom, are set forth. The most important extension will be northward and eastward to include the ports of Leith and Portobello. One of the main reasons for this

extension is to enable the city authorities to exercise strict control over the construction of new buildings beyond the present limits of the city. The identity of interest of the three towns has been repeatedly shown when questions of public improvement were discussed. In many important cases unity of administration exists at the present time. The authority of the water trust, the gas commission, and the sewage and purification commission, extends over the entire area. While unification will undoubtedly mean an increase in the tax-rate of the suburban districts, this will be fully compensated by the increased efficiency of the municipal services, both in quantity and quality.

**Paris.**—*Census.*—The census of 1896, as that of 1891, shows a very slight increase in the population of France. The larger cities, however, are absorbing far more than this total increase. The total population in 1891 was 38,095,150; in 1896, 38,228,969, an increase of 133,819. Of the eighty-seven departments, sixty-three show an actual decrease in population, whereas twenty-four show an increase. Of these latter, those containing the larger cities stand at the top of the list. In the Department of the Seine the increase has been 197,008; in the Nord, 72,627; in the Bouches-du-Rhône, 46,368.

*Architectural Commission.*—The new prefect of the Seine has added another to the series of permanent commissions which have contributed so largely to the efficiency of the administration of Paris. A permanent architectural commission has been established to act as an advisory board to the executives of the various departments in matters of street and building construction. A number of the greatest French architects and artists have been appointed to membership on this commission. It is this element of permanency of tenure of the heads of departments which is the key to the French municipal administration. No matter what the changes in the municipal council, there is always a trained head to each department, who, through long service and assured tenure, is able to plan and carry out large public works under his personal supervision. The council and its committees are dependent upon such officials for guidance and information. The present commission will constitute a guarantee that every matter which requires architectural or other artistic skill will be submitted to the best talent of France.